DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 118 527 SP 009 569

TITLE	A Conference Design for Teacher Centered Inservice Education.
INSTITUTION	National Education Association, Washington, D.C. Div. of Instruction and Professional Development.
PUB DATE	[75]
NOTE	20p.; For related document, see SP 009 568; Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document
AVAILABLE FROM	National Education Association, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (No price quoted)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Design Needs; *Evaluation Needs; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Local Unions; *School Surveys; Teacher Associations; *Teacher Workshops

ABSTRACT

The document discusses teacher-centered inservice teacher education. It describes how local associations of teachers can get together to insure that inservice education will reflect their needs, answer their questions, and help with their specific problems. An outline is presented for a model conference to plan such a program. (CD)

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A CONFERENCE DESIGN

FOR

TEACHER CENTERED INSERVICE EDUCATION

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

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There are many ways for an association to have a workshop on the association's role in inservice education. What follows is one way.

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National Education Association
Instruction and Professional Development
1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

CONFERENCE DESIGN

First Day

4:00 p.m. Leader orientation. Walk-through of program as outlined with an opportunity for pre-selected group facilitators to ask questions about what is expected of them, make suggestions for program refinements, etc.

5:00 p.m. Ice Breaker Social Hour

6:00 p.m. Dinner. (Seating at round tables, eight participants to a table, such as numbers on name badges.)

Goal: As great a mixture as possible of faculties from different schools: elementary-secondary teachers, association leaders, etc. One place at each table reserved for group facilitator. (Member of planning committee or other person who attended 4:00 p.m. meeting for general briefing.

7:00 p.m. First general session: "Why are we here?"

Welcoming Remarks Introduction

Keynote Presentation: "Inservice Education: What the Local Association Can Do About It!"

(Attachment item I is information for your guest speaker.)

1. Panel Discussion:

"What Teacher Centered Professional Development Means to Us"

(Members of planning committee, Instruction and Professional Development Committee, Inservice Education Committee, etc.,

talk among themselves about the source of--and pressures for--greater association influence in inservice education, domination on the part of school administration, reasons for teachers being "fed up" with existing inservice programs, etc.

2. Now What Can Your Local Do?

(Each table group would discuss ways how their local association might begin a Teacher Centered Inservice Education program.)

3. Open discussion

Questions concerning the Teacher Centered Inservice concept, the basic assumptions, the need for inservice education, etc.

Second Day

9:00 a.m. "What Teacher Centered Professional Development Means to Me"

Presiding officer makes statement about Teacher Centered Professional Development as follows:

"The purpose of the first evening's presentation was to open up the whole concept of teachers control over their own inservice education. This was done in the context of presenting teacher influence in making decisions about inservice education as a viable and organizational sound association activity.

"The first activity of this morning's session is to individualize the concept--to help each teacher at the workshop discover for him or herself what teacher centered inservice education means in terms of his or her own needs and his or her own ways of learning."

9:30 a.m. Room Arrangement: Participants return to same tables as occupied the evening before.

Step 1. The facilitator appoints a group recorder or asks the group to select one.

Step 2. The facilitator assigns the following tasks:

a. Each person in the group (the group facilitator included) to talk out loud a bit about what his/her one, single greatest problem in the actual process of helping students learn. (Ruled out of order for this task are such considerations as too large a class, worry about meeting end-of-month bills, or other administrative or purely personal questions. The focus is on teaching skills: motivation, diagnosing learning difficulties, etc.)

b. After each person has had an opportunity to state his one problem, the leader asks each participant to state why he or she thinks it is a problem.

c. As a third go-round, the leader asks each participant to try and identify what one skill or knowledge he needs to help him do a better job in the particular problem area he has identified.

d. Together, the group helps the recorder fill out the report form (see Report Form I attached.)

Step 3. The recorder or group leader makes brief report to total group and hands in Report Form I.

10:00 a.m. Break

10:30 a.m. Exercise: How do teachers learn?

1. Participants, working alone, respond to the following: "jot down two, three, or more experiences you have had that have led to better performance as a teacher. Were these activities individual or group? Job related or not? In school or out-of-school? Formal or informal? Credit or noncredit? Were the expenses paid by the school? Use the form provided. (See Work Form I attached.)

2. Individuals report to total group. Reporter for total group lists illustrative examples of the learning experience reported on a blackboard or newsprint.

11:00 a.m. Generalizations:

Group discussion: The next half hour would be spent in general discussion of such topics as:

What kinds of learning experiences do teachers report as having been of most help to them in teaching them a new skill, attitude, or point of view?

12:00 noon Adjourn

12:30 p.m. Luncheon

Luncheon Presentation: "Professional Negotiations for Professional Development." (Guest speaker to make this presentation. Resource available (Attachment II) is Negotiation Strategies for Inservice Education.)

Follow this with a panel which will discuss points raised by the speaker. Possible participants:

1. Chairman of Negotiation Committee
2. President of Association
3. Chairman of Instruction and Professional Development Committee.
4. Others who are either "pro" or "con" on the concept of Professional Negotiation for Professional Development.

2:00 p.m. The Needs Assessment

(Assistance for this exercise is included in Attachment III)

3:00 p.m. General Session - Part I

"What should our local education association do about inservice education?"

Table groups: Informal discussion:

The table facilitator to keep discussion generally on focus of "Is it meaningful for our particular local association (not locals

in general) to work toward greater involvement of teachers in making decisions about their own staff development, negotiations for public support, released time, etc.

After about 45 minutes of small group discussion, ask each group to name a representative from their table to meet with one representative of each of the other tables in a "fish bowl" discussion--a circle of chairs--one for a member of each group--plus a empty chair for anyone in the group who wishes to enter the group, make a contribution, and then return to his own place leaving the chair "empty" for any other participant who so chooses to enter the circle and make a comment. Usually, no moderator for this kind of discussion is necessary. When the group runs out of steam, the presiding officer can cut it off.

(The purpose of the Roundtable discussion will have been to test and fix the position of the participants as it relates to teachers' involvement, under association auspices, in their own inservice education and professional development.)

4:00 p.m. General Session - Part II

"Where do we go from here?"

Presiding: Chairman, Instruction and Professional Development Committee. Sitting beside the Chairman will be the IPD Committee members and Association officers. It will be their role to listen to the specific recommendations for later action by the Committee and/or Association.

The purpose of the final session, through group discussion, will be to formulate policies and actions for committee consideration.

Some examples might be:

a. Formulation of some policies relative to teacher involvement in inservice education to take to the negotiation table.

b. Organization of a system-wide Instruction and Professional Development committee with one representative in each school.

c. A system-wide needs assessment.

d. Review of status of teacher representation on existing inservice planning committees.

e. Review of allocation and expenditure of funds currently authorized for inservice education.

f. Formulation of proposal for Inservice Education programs and Teacher Centers.

WORK FORM I

As an individual, not a group member, jot down as many personal experiences as you can think of that have helped you--or had the potential of helping you--become a better teacher. They can be individual or group activities, job related or not, in school or out of school, formal or informal. It makes no difference whether you were paid, if you had to pay, or if it were free.

REPORT FORM I

I. What were the problems (needs) identified? There can be no more listed than the number in the sub-group. Each participant was to suggest only his most pressing instructional concern or anxiety. List in "how to" terms. If there is concensus around one or two, list only those:

1. How to ...
2. How to ...
3. How to ...
4. How to ...
5. How to ...
6. How to ...

II. List in an order corresponding to the above, the reasons given as to why the problem or concern exists.

III. List, again in corresponding order, the skills or knowledge most needed to strengthen, improve skills, or otherwise overcome the problem area.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

HIGHLIGHTS

If teacher centered inservice education is to become a reality, the local association must influence the local school board to provide an opportunity for teachers to do two things:

- o Identify for themselves the new skills and knowledge that changing situations, new demands of the job, or their own increased awareness make it seem useful to acquire
- o Design a delivery system for inservice education that is most effective for teachers.

There are various ways to go about this, but four of the most important initial steps are:

- o Teacher association involvement in needs assessment
- o Accountability of the supervisory staff to teachers
- o Knowing the monies already spent for inservice education and plans for any redirection of funds from other budgeted accounts
- o Adequate representation for teachers on policy and governance boards

In addition, inservice education that is truly <u>teacher centered</u> must be:

- o Made available to teachers on the school district's time
- o Paid out of public funds

If all the above are to come about, it means that:

- o Teachers must have a preeminent voice in the governance of inservice education programs
- o Local education associations must make it their business to bargain for--to negotiate for--to be an advocate for-- teacher rights in the inservice field.

The keynote address. Every conference seems to have one. And it's a good idea! It's a way to set the tone and substance of a conference, its boundaries, and its aspirations.

The paper that follows may serve as a preliminary outline--as a thought starter--for the president of the local association or other individual called upon to open an association-sponsored conference on inservice education.

Perhaps, rather than using it as resource material for an opening statement, some locals may prefer to distribute the paper in advance to the conference participants as prerequisite reading; or some may want to provide "reading time" during the conference for this and other relevant material.

However the paper is used--or however it is changed and modified to meet the needs of each different local association--its purpose is to open up the questions of how, when, if, and why the local association should be involved in inservice education.

WHAT IS TEACHER-CENTERED INSERVICE EDUCATION?

Have you ever thought you wanted to learn a new approach or technique by observing another teacher?

Have you ever wanted to learn how to dramatize learning experiments for students?

Have you ever wanted to share techniques with other teachers of how to handled troubled students?

Have you ever wanted to share with other teachers in the conceiving, designing, and preparation of materials for your students?

Have you ever wanted. . .?

I'm here today to tell you what your local association can do to help you find answers to these and similar questions through inservice education.

For too long, local school districts, state departments of education, and colleges and universities have been in the inservice education decision-making game. They know the rules and the position that each is to play. For most local teacher associations, it is a spectator game. The question is not only can the association also get into the game--but should it? And if it does, what position do the members play, what skills do they use to be an effective part of the team? How do teachers make certain they are numbered among the players and not be the ball that's tossed around?

To begin with, let's understand not all inservice education can be exclusively teacher centered; that is, focused soley on teacher needs as teachers see them. Nor is it reasonable to think that all inservice education will always be delivered in a manner that serves the immediate

instructional needs of personnel in the classroom, library, counseling office, health center, or other teaching/learning environment.

Let's also understand that when the teacher association gains economic benefits, it costs the school district money. With but a limited amount of new money to go around, local associations are understandably reluctant to bargain for tuition reimbursement programs or other inservice education programs that will take money away from salary or fringe benefits. But while there are obviously economic implications to meaningful involvement of teachers in inservice education, its democratization is not primarily an economic matter.

Money is already being spent for inservice education!

We also know universities have held a virtual monopoly in the inservice education of teachers. This is not to say they do not have expertise and resources we should tap, but we must recognize that many at the university level have not been in public school classrooms for several years. We must, in other words, enter into the kind of partnership with the universities that enables us to tell them--not them tell us--what help, training, and new learning we need.

Teacher centered inservice education does not take the place of summer school courses or after school classes set up by the school district and the university either alone or in cooperation with each other. It is not a substitute for courses providing salary credit, certificate renewal, or an advance degree. Ideally, it should include these learning opportunities, but it must go considerably beyond them. It may not replace any inservice education program that is mandated as a condition of federal or state program

grant, or other formal inservice programs, but it may strongly influence them. And it must shake to its foundations the notion that the traditional once-a-semester "inservice day" is an adequate all-inclusive approach to inservice education!

In a very broad sense, teacher centered inservice education can be defined as the kind of ongoing, learing-by-doing, job-oriented professional development program teachers invariably say they want. Frequently the most sought after instructors are peers--other successful teachers.

Some examples:

- A high school chemistry teacher knows that a fellow chemistry teacher at a school across town seems to be able to make molecules and valences and equations consistently become important to the students. The teacher wants to spend a week with his colleague at the other school observing how it is done.
- A teacher feels self-consious sitting on the floor and rapping with the students. This teacher's need: to learn how to relate to students more informally and without condenscension.
- A teacher feels the need to know more about the how, when, and where of developing dramatizations as a learning experience for students.
- A teacher wants help in handling a particularly troublesome student and thinks that perhaps some videotaping followed by a screening with the parents, the supervisor, and perhaps with the child present would be an effective way to go about it.
- An experienced teacher transferred to a school with students drawn largely from a different subculture wants to learn the reason for the unfamiliar cultural behavioral patterns members of the class exhibit.

If a teacher centered inservice education is to become a reality, the local association must influence the local school board to provide an opportunity for teachers to do two things:

- o Identify for themselves the new skills and knowledge that changing situations, new demands of the job, or their own increased awareness make it seem useful to acquire
- o Design a delivery system for inservice education that is most effective for teachers.

School districts have long held to the notion that an assessment of the inservice education needs of teachers is a good thing. I am sure many of you have completed the questionnaire forms prepared in the central office. These were then, in all probability, tabulated and analyzed in the central office, and followed by a program planned by the central office. Perhaps you were involved in the process, but for many reasons your influence was limited.

Making certain that teachers have a major voice in identifying for themselves the new knowledges and skills that they know will be helpful to them in the classroom is a job that probably will not get done unless the local teacher association sees to it that it is done.

Convincing administrators and supervisors that they cannot do most of the thinking for teachers about inservice education--even when done in conjunction with an administratively orientated, teacher advisory committee--is one of the first responsibilities of the leadership of the local association.

There are various ways to go about this, but four of the most important initial steps are:

- o Teacher association involvement in needs assessment
- o Accountability of the supervisory staff to teachers
- o Knowing the monies already spent for inservice education and plans for any redirection of funds from other budgeted accounts.
- o Adequate representation for teachers on policy and governance boards.

In addition, inservice education that is truly teacher centered must be:

- Made available to teachers on the school district's time
- Paid out of public funds.

If all the above are to come about, it means that:

- Teachers must have a preeminent voice in the governance of inservice education programs
- Local education associations must make it their business to bargain for--to negotiate for--to be an advocate for--teacher rights in the inservice field.

Most teachers will secure the right to a preeminent voice in decision making about their own inservice education by strong teacher advocacy. Experience has shown that university people and public school administrators do not easily and voluntarily relinquish the predominant authority they have long enjoyed in respect to inservice education and professional development. The preeminent voice for teachers will not be won unless the local association sees that it is won.

What is "adequate" teacher representation on a committee established to plan inservice education programs?

Typically, 80 percent of the staff employed by a school district is instructional personnel. Should 80 percent of the inservice education committee's membership be teachers?

No perfect formula for "parity" has yet emerged. But in forging out the patterns of representation that make teacher centered sense for the members of any given local, the following must not be forgotten:

Item: Teacher members of decision-making groups are, at best, usually part-time volunteers willing to take on a planning and policy-formulating role. Public school administrators and college faculty usually selected to serve on an advisory committee are frequently employed full time as administrators or planners.

Item: School administrators or supervisors serving on an advisory committee or policy board usually can be provided with the services of a secretary, desk and telephone, and immediate access to top officials in the school district.

Item: Psychologically, teachers do not like to be "done good to". They want a decisive voice in their own personal and professional growth.

Local education associations working cooperatively with their state association may wish to take on the state department of education and the colleges and universities in bringing about a greater measure of responsiveness to teachers' interest in adding to their teaching skills. Some teacher associations now--others eventually--may want to push for overhaul of the certificate renewal system, the advance degree program, the adademic incentives for salary promotion, and the administration's own institutionally orientated inservice education program.

Well and good.

But in terms of present teacher discontent, the target that seems to make most sense to many locals is the one of putting some functionality--

and some equity--into the days, sometimes weeks, that are set aside--and the money that is already appropriated--for so-called inservice education.

Effective advocacy cannot only turn around existing fiscal policies of local boards of education as they relate to inservice education but, on occasion, "find" appropriated funds that either are not being spent or are being directed toward a traditionally favored few.

The basic issue of teacher involvement in inservice education is not solely an economic one or solely a professional development one. It is both. But many times, with no increase in the expenditure of funds, meaningless inservice education exercises can be transformed into meaningful learning experiences when those who are the recipients of the product are also in command of the planning process.

The local association should be determined to look at the whole range of inservice concepts. Are courses and classes the only way to earn academic or salary credit, or only the most administratively convenient way? Can association involvement in inservice education--the process of constantly becoming a better trained teacher--become a condition of work, an integral part of every teaching assignment?

The potential agenda for local associations seeking to escalate member involvement in inservice education is long indeed. Where it begins--how far it goes--is what this meeting is all about.